

Sustainable Growth for the Tsachila

Bua, Ecuador



Project Cost

\$44,000

Funds Needed

\$27,000

Chapter

Portland Professionals

Background

The community of Bua is one of seven remaining communities of the Tsachila culture also more widely known as “Colorados”, a reference to the red color they use to dye the men’s hair and the lines they paint on their bodies. There are less than 3,000 remaining Tsachila. Bua, a Tsachila community, has roughly 700 members scattered on small plots of farmland in what was once rainforest covering the lower western slopes of the Andes.



The Need

The Abraham Calazacon School in Bua, Ecuador is severely under-funded and lacks the basic necessities for a satisfactory education. The sanitation system is undersized and spills out onto the open ground and the school lacks sufficient drinking water during the dry season. Making matters worse, the septic field is located near the existing water supply well potentially causing contamination. The school wants to add a tenth grade extending the local available education, but is delaying plans because of the lack of a sustainable, functioning sanitation system.

The EWB-USA Response

Teaming with Yanapuma Foundation

The Yanapuma Foundation, an NGO in Ecuador is working extensively with the larger community to aid in the development of an ethnographic museum, medicinal gardens, as well as developing a waste recycling program and installing demonstration eco-toilets at the museum. Yanapuma contacted EWB Portland Professionals Chapter asking for technical help with several problems they had observed at the Abraham Calazacon School.

Surveying the Situation

In the spring of 2008 a team of Portland-based professionals visited Bua and met with the school principal, village leaders and other

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community members to learn about the general school issues, health situation, and local culture. The team completed a survey of the school property and buildings and tested water quality from the school well and cistern. With this initial assessment information we are now developing sanitation options to be presented to the community for implementation.

Implementation

In September 2008, the team travelled back to Bua to address urgent repairs and add sanitation capacity through the addition of more sustainable compost toilets. The team was in the community for approximately 1 month and worked alongside community members to accomplish the trip objectives.

Moving Forward

The team has developed a master plan of Abraham Calazacon School needs and has begun planning future phases including additional water supply through a deeper well or rainwater harvesting system, addition of a bio-marsh leech field, and additional health/hygiene education.

To Learn more about this project:

Visit: www.ewbportland.org

OR

Contact: kathy@ewbportland.org